

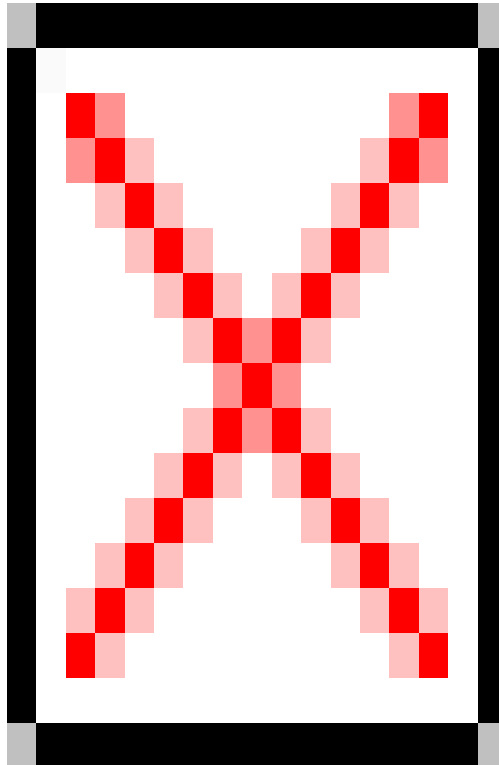
A TAXMAN'S PROLIFIC PEN

The Fine Print And Other Years

Author by Mr Dinesh Verma, IRS,

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MR Dinesh Verma is an IRS officer of the 1980 batch. He is a Francophile having studied in Paris on two occasions. Dinesh is an alumni of the prestigious L'Institut international d'administration publique. He has also done an MBA from one of the famous 'Grandes écoles'-the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées.

Dinesh is a student of English Literature and this is his first oeuvre. He is also a taxman. The rare combination of all these qualities comes through in his book which is a collection of nine short stories or novellas - Buddy the Impressionist, The Overcoat, The visitor, Another Visitor, The Fine Print, The Insomniac, Pieter Van der Polder, The Mobile Phone Dealer, Bawa and his white Fiat. The last two stories are set in contemporary India. However, the setting of the first four stories is in Paris of the mid eighties when India was still an autarchy of sorts; when foreign exchange was scarce, when rich or poor, young or old, influential or otherwise, one was allowed to take out only 500\$ against one's passport. The second set of three stories are also based in Paris of the mid nineties when thanks to the liberalization, the craze for everything foreign was no longer there. The stories obviously have autobiographical elements and are based on the lives and experiences of Indian students trying to make ends meet with the meager scholarship and the meager foreign exchange.

We thus get the curious transformation of the generous and hospitable Amitabh in the true to life and hilarious story 'The overcoat'. The detailed observation of the psyche of the students studying in Paris at that time is really remarkable. With his incisive observation of human nature, the characters portrayed by Shri Verma come alive. In 'The Visitor', the discomfiture of the peripatetic Dr Chopra in Paris is lifelike. One almost feels one's heart beat faster as Dr Chopra tries to find his way around to his hotel. The moans and sighs filtering through the wall separating the adjacent rooms which make Alu insomniac are hilarious and real. Many Indian students going abroad may still do not realize that one is supposed to pay one's share even when one is invited at a birthday party. These and many more vignettes are brought out in masterly fashion by Dinesh through his wonderful story telling ability.

Similarly, any taxman will be able to easily relate to the dilemma faced by the protagonist of the story 'The Mobile Phone Dealer'.

With a racy narrative style and a subtle sense of humor, the book has that 'unputdownable' quality. So, go ahead and finish reading it. Besides, the book also contains interesting information which can be of use to all who want to go abroad for higher studies.

Dinesh Verma is currently occupying a senior post in the Central Board of Direct Taxes. One wishes that he writes a similar book of stories containing the goings on in the North Block. Plenty of material must have been available to him. We are eagerly waiting for his second book.